Dr. *MOSS's*

CHARGE

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

Archdeaconry of *Colcheſter.*

41

A CHARGE TO THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF COLCHESTER,

Occaſioned by the

UNCOMMON MORTALITY

And quick Succeſſion of BISHOPS in the See of

LONDON,

At a Viſitation holden in *May*, 1764.

By *CHARLES MOSS*, D. D.
Archdeacon of *Colcheſter*, Rector of St. *George's*, *Hanover-Square*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majeſty.

694. k. 19. 16

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

A CHARGE, &c.

My Revd. Brethren,

IT HAS been uſual for the Archdeacon, when occaſion requires it, to cloſe the ſolemnity of theſe Synodical meetings, with a word of inſtruction or exhortation to the Clergy. But there are very few of you, I am perſuaded, that need any inſtruction in your paſtoral duty; and none of you, I hope, any exhortation from me to perform it.

THE particular point, to which I would call your attention at this time is, the ſingular fate of this great and important dioceſe; which has been deprived of three of

its ſpiritual heads in leſs than three years, and two of them in leſs than one.

I HAVE no intention, as you will eaſily believe, of making any ſuperſtitious deductions from theſe melancholy events; or of augurating any future evil to the church, from this rapid mortality in ſome of the great pillars of it. they may well be ſuppoſed to happen in the common courſe of things, from the infinite chances of mortality. and I mention them only as ſingular in themſelves, as well as affecting to us who are immediately intereſted in them; and as being without example in the hiſtory of the See, from its firſt eſtabliſhment to the preſent time.

THE worthy Prelate, who has juſt reſigned his breath, came to this high ſtation at an advanced age; and did not fill it long enough to be well known to his Clergy, eſpecially in the more remote parts of his dioceſe. But, had his lot been caſt amongſt us in the earlier part of his life, or had Providence

vidence permitted him to continue his rule over us; the experience of a few years would, I doubt not, have convinced us, that a general knowledge of the world, and of buſineſs, a gentlemanly addreſs and deportment, a juſt ſenſe of his own dignity, and a becoming zeal for the intereſts of religion, are valuable qualities in a Chriſtian Biſhop, and would have made a worthy governor of a Chriſtian Church.

THE perſon, who filled the epiſcopal chair immediately before him, came to it at a time, when his powers, both of body and mind, were in their vigour; but he had no opportunity of diſplaying them: His period was ſhort indeed.

Oſtendunt terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Eſſe ſinunt.

But his abilities were ſuch, that, had it been the will of heaven to indulge him with a longer date, it is not to be doubted but he would have done honour to the weighty charge, with which his Majeſty was pleaſed to intruſt him.

His accompliſhments as a ſcholar, and his talents for buſineſs, were well known to thoſe who lived in friendſhip with him, and had the beſt knowledge of letters and of the world. and, though the high ſtation he filled in the church for many years, and the honourable part he once had in the education of our preſent moſt gracious Sovereign, engaged him in a large acquaintance with perſons of the firſt conſequence, and a conſtant intercourſe of buſineſs with the great world, yet his hours of retirement were employed in ſtudy, and the converſation of thoſe who were moſt eminent for their parts and learning.

The Apoſtle reckons it an eſſential property in a chriſtian Biſhop, to be *given to hoſpitality*; and no man ſtood higher than our worthy Prelate in this part of the epiſcopal character: his doors were open, and his table acceſſible to all men of diſtinguiſhed knowledge in every branch of ſcience, and the liberal arts; and he had a pleaſure in contributing to the extenſion of ſociety and friend-

friendſhip amongſt perſons of worth and merit, and to the more free circulation and improvement of uſeful learning. His own knowledge of books and of the world, and more eſpecially an excellent taſte of the *belles lettres*, enabled him to appear with great advantage in ſuch a circle of literary friends; and on theſe, as on all other occaſions, he was peculiarly happy in leading the converſation, by an eaſy and familiar habit of varying the ſubject, of ſupplying freſh matter, when it ſeemed to be exhauſted, and ſupporting it with a ſpirit and vivacity, that were natural to him, and ſerved to render even trivial ſubjects intereſting.

WHILST he was engaged in the important work of forming the mind and principles of our preſent excellent Monarch, he ſtood foremoſt in the road of promotion of any man of his rank and order. but the charge he ſuſtained was delicate as it was weighty; and, though he had all the talents that were neceſſary to conduct it, with honour to himſelf, and advantage to his

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Royal pupil, yet he fell on a ſudden under the reſentment and frowns of the court, in a degree that men of his profeſſion and order have ſeldom experienced; and what was worſt of all, the circumſtances of his caſe were ſuch, as threatened to perpetuate his diſgrace. and yet, after all, he had the peculiar felicity to be reſtored, in a few years, to the favour of his Royal maſter, and left the world at a time when he had juſt received the ſtrongeſt proof of it. And, though the favour of courts is precarious, and extraordinary turns of fortune will always depend on particular times and conjunctures, yet ſuch a change and exaltation, after ſuch a diſgrace, could not be the work of fortune, without ſuperior merit to give weight and force to it.

He took upon him the burthen of this great See, with a juſt ſenſe of the weight and importance of it. he conſidered the patronage annexed to it, as a ſacred truſt put into his hands, for the benefit of learning and religion. and I have often been told by thoſe

thoſe who were moſt in his confidence and counſels, that it was the firm purpoſe of his mind, to acquit himſelf of that truſt in ſtrict conformity to the nature of it; and to fill the dignities and other great offices of his church and dioceſe, with men who were moſt diſtinguiſhed for their learning, their zeal for religion, and for our happy eſtabliſhment in church and ſtate. This plan of conduct, and theſe diſpoſitions of mind, joined to a liberal and munificent heart, afforded a fair preſumption, that, had it been the will of Providence to lengthen his life, every thing might have been expected from him that was becoming the dignity of a great Prelate, at the head of the moſt important juriſdiction in this Proteſtant kingdom.

I AM glad of this opportunity of giving a public teſtimony of my reſpect for the memory of Biſhop *Hayter*; who was truly worthy of the high rank he bore in the church, and was indeed one of the moſt reſpectable perſons of his order.

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BUT the perſon, whoſe hiſtory and character I would more particularly recall to your thoughts, is the great Prelate who immediately preceded him; whoſe memory will be ever dear to thoſe who wiſh well to religion, and the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment in this kingdom; and whoſe name will be honoured in future times, whilſt parts and genius, great talents and extenſive knowledge, with unſhaken integrity of mind and heart, continue to be reſpectable in the opinion of men. Ordinary parts are the growth of every time and place; and ſuch, with a timely and diligent cultivation, produce able and uſeful men in the different ſtations of life. but a genius is the product of an age; and it is the glory of the laſt age that it produced a SHERLOCK.

FROM the firſt dawnings of reaſon he ſhewed an eager thirſt for knowledge, and he took in the firſt rudiments of it at *Eton*. Here he applied himſelf to grammatical learning under an able maſter; and laid the foundation of that claſſical elegance and

cor-

correctneſs, which do ſo much honour to all his compoſitions.

IT has ſometimes been remarked, that fine parts frequently lye concealed, and are not to be developed by any art of education, till a man is paſt his youth, and is advancing perhaps towards the middle of life; and there is a tradition which I have often heard, that this was the caſe of Biſhop *Sherlock*. but it is a tradition for which there is certainly no colour of truth. it appears from the teſtimony of thoſe that knew him in his early youth, that in that, as in all other parts of his life, he ſtood on the higheſt ground; that in the courſe of his education he was always at the head of his claſs, and never failed to lead his equals and companions, even in their puerile ſports and amuſements.

FROM *Eton* he was removed to *Catharine Hall*, in the univerſity of *Cambridge*, of which ſociety he was ſucceſſively choſen fellow and maſter; and was afterwards promoted

moted to the office of Vice-Chancelor of that Univerſity. Whilſt he was in this ſtation, no man was more attentive than himſelf to the buſineſs of it. the public records and archives had, for many years, lain in great confuſion; and he thought it an indignity to that learned body, that papers and public inſtruments, of ſuch value and conſequence, ſhould continue longer in ſo confuſed and uſeleſs a ſtate. he examined them accordingly with great care, and reduced them into proper order; and the knowledge he acquired in the proſecution of this work, repaid him amply for his trouble. The conſtitution of the Univerſity, in ſome parts of it, is not clearly defined and aſcertained, on account of ſome obſcurity and defects in its hiſtory, and by means of the different ſources from whence it derived its power and immunities; but, by the help of theſe archives, and other materials that fell into his hands, he acquired ſuch a knowledge of it, that, in the ſubſequent part of his life, he was appealed to as a kind of oracle, in doubts and difficulties, that occaſionally aroſe,

roſe, in regard to its juriſdiction and government.

HE was placed at the head of the two ſocieties of the Temple, as ſoon almoſt as he was of ſufficient age to hold a benefice in the church. Such a ſtation, at ſuch an age, to a man of ordinary parts, would rather have brought contempt with it, than reſpect; and indeed great prejudices aroſe againſt him, on the ſcore of his youth, on his firſt deſignation to that office. but a ſhort trial of his abilities entirely removed them. his parts and judgment were ripe, and his knowledge was far beyond his years. he was duly ſenſible of the importance of his ſtation, and was the more diligent in improving the great talents that nature had given him, that he might not be wanting in any accompliſhment that was neceſſary to fill it with dignity.

HIS ambition was equal to his parts; and he would have thought it an indignity to have been the ſecond in any character in which

which he choſe to appear. Young therefore as he was when he appeared firſt in the character of a public preacher, he ſoon ſurpaſſed the moſt eminent preachers of thoſe times, in ſolidity of matter, in ſtrength of reaſoning, and true pulpit eloquence.

THERE are very few now living who are able to remember thoſe times; but, if general report and tradition did not ſupport me in this obſervation, there is a teſtimony that I can appeal to, which is above all exception; and that is, his own diſcourſes, which he was happily prevailed on to give to the public, a few years before his death; and which, with very few exceptions, were all the product of his younger years. The reception they have met with, is a full proof of their merit; and I do but declare the judgment of the public, in ſaying, that, for variety and choice of matter, and the judicious arrangement of it, for ſtrength and ſolidity of reaſoning, for force and elegance of language, and for a natural flow of manly eloquence, they ſtand in the firſt rank of repu-

reputation of any theological diſcourſes in the *Engliſh*, or any other language.

ORIGINAL characters are rarely to be found in any claſs or profeſſion of men. original writers of any order are but few; and feweſt of all perhaps amongſt the writers of ſermons. it is natural for a young preacher to take ſome writer of name and character, as his model for compoſition; or he falls inſenſibly into an imitation of thoſe writers, who happen to ſuit beſt with his taſte and judgment: he borrows their matter, copies their method and manner, and works their ſpirit, ſentiments and language into his own compoſitions. and, in general, he that reads the beſt writers, and takes them for his pattern in writing, purſues the moſt promiſing method of becoming a good writer himſelf. But a true genius always ſtands on his own ground. his air, dreſs, and figure, are all his own; and he diſdains to appear in borrowed colours. he reads the books of others to ſtock his mind with ideas, to exerciſe his

reaſon, and to inform his judgment. but when he ſits down to write, it is on rules or models, that are the reſult of his own reflection, with materials ſuggeſted by his own imagination, and thrown into ſuch order and method as are dictated by the natural train of his own ideas.

If you compare the diſcourſes of the moſt eminent divines on the ſame ſubject, you will find a ſimilarity of matter, or method, or both. If you make the ſame experiment on the diſcourſes of this great man, the caſe will be far otherwiſe. you will ſee new topics ſtruck out on the ſame general argument, new *media* to ſupport the ſame general concluſion, and ſomething new perhaps in the arrangement of the matter, as well as in the application of it. There is, in ſhort, ſomething in every diſcourſe that is peculiarly his own; it ſtrikes you at once in the light of an original, and you recognize, at firſt ſight, the genuine characters of a great maſter.

PERSPICUITY is a diſtinguiſhing character of theſe, as well as of all his other compoſitions; a character that is eſſential to good writing; the natural conſequence of a clearneſs and diſtinctneſs of conception, and a certain proof of it. Of all the writers I ever read, and of all the men I ever converſed with, (for his converſation was in every reſpect ſimilar to his more ſtudied productions) he had a ſingular felicity in the diſpoſition or arrangement of his matter, and never failed of placing it in the light that was moſt apt to ſtrike the imagination and convince the judgment. This happy art of methodizing his argument, this *lucidus ordo*, as *Horace* calls it, is that which makes every ſubject he undertakes, ſo eaſy to the reader's memory. the ideas follow one another in a natural and regular train, and the connection is ſo clear and obvious, that, if you once get into his plan of thought, your memory carries you through without difficulty or trouble.

WHILST he was attending his charge at the Temple, and ſupporting it with a dignity and ability that were far beyond his years, he was taking the proper meaſures for appearing, with like advantage, in characters of another kind. He was, by his ſituation, connected with the gentlemen of the long robe, and had by that means opportunity of contracting intimacies with the moſt eminent of that profeſſion. By theſe connections he was led inſenſibly into the ſtudy of the *Engliſh* law, both civil and eccleſiaſtical; and though the technical and mechanical part of law was not ſo much worthy of his attention, yet he was as well acquainted with the hiſtory of the law of *England*, with the origin and foundation of it, and with its general rules and principles; in ſhort, as much a maſter of both branches of juriſprudence, as a ſcience, as the moſt learned of either profeſſion.

ALL ſcience is founded in general maxims or propoſitions, from whence particular truths may be deduced, or truth in particular

ticular caſes may be ſought and determined. a man may carry in his memory an accurate regiſter of philoſophical experiments or natural phænomena, without being a philoſopher; and he may be maſter of a voluminous common place of adjudged caſes, without being a lawyer. It is a knowledge of the principle or cauſe, that produces the effect in any experiment or phænomenon, that conſtitutes the philoſopher; and, for the ſame reaſon, it is a knowledge of the general maxim or principle, on which the judgment in particular caſes is founded, that properly makes the lawyer. It is in this ſenſe, that the great Prelate we are ſpeaking of, was a maſter of *Engliſh* juriſprudence. for though his knowledge of particular decrees and adjudged caſes could not be ſuppoſed as extenſive, as that of the learned gentlemen of that profeſſion; yet he was poſſeſſed of thoſe general maxims of law and equity by which ſuch caſes are governed; and he was very happy in the application of them to any new caſe that came before him.

It ſometimes happens, that ſhining abilities ſerve rather to retard, than accelerate a man's advancement in the road of promotion, and ſomething of this kind happened in the caſe of Biſhop *Sherlock*. The envy and the jealouſy of ſome who were concerned in directing the counſels of government, withheld him for many years from thoſe honours in his profeſſion, for which his great talents had deſigned him. He was paſt the middle of life, when he was promoted to the higheſt order of the church, and, in conſequence of that, to a ſeat in the upper houſe of parliament; and the knowledge he had acquired of the laws and conſtitution of *England*, enabled him to appear with greater weight and dignity, both as a governor of the church, and a lord of parliament. When he aſſiſted at the deliberations of that great aſſembly, on the arduous buſineſs of the nation, he was not content to bear a ſilent teſtimony, but oftentimes took upon him an active part, and, though the art of public and extemporaneous ſpeaking is uſually acquired by uſe and practice,

tice, and his profeſſion and manner of life had afforded him no opportunity of exerciſing his talents in this way; yet, when a fit occaſion offered, he entered freely into a ſhare of public buſineſs, and debated on ſuch points as became his ſtation, with thoſe who had the greateſt experience, and the beſt abilities in public ſpeaking. his firſt attempts in this way were the performances of a maſter. he delivered himſelf before the moſt auguſt aſſembly in the nation, with the ſame eaſe, elegance, and force, as if oratory had been the ſtudy and practice of his life; or, as if it had been a gift of nature, and not an art to be attained by time and exerciſe.

BUT he was ſenſible of the reſerve, that became his order and profeſſion in that place; and ſeldom roſe up to declare his opinion, except on points in which the eccleſiaſtical or civil conſtitution was eſſentially concerned, or by which the authority of the crown or the liberties of the ſubject were materially affected. and, in what cauſe

cauſe ſoever he appeared, he laid down one rule to himſelf, from which he never departed; and that is, not to introduce foreign matter, to waſte the time, and confound the judgment of his audience; but to adhere cloſely to the point in queſtion, and confine himſelf to ſuch topics only, as tended directly to illuſtrate and confirm it. were every ſenator bound to obſerve the ſame rule, the public, I apprehend, would be no loſers by it. it would at leaſt ſhorten the time, and lighten the burden of parliamentary attendance, and afford no ſmall relief to thoſe who are appointed to conduct the buſineſs of government.

If he was ever prevailed on to engage on party ſubjects, or to co-operate with miniſters in ſupport of ſome conteſted meaſure of government, it was never without the fulleſt conviction of the rectitude of the cauſe. and on theſe, as on other occaſions, when he entered the liſts in good earneſt, he ſpoke with that ſolidity of argument, and maſterly eloquence, that it was no eaſy

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taſk for thoſe who were moſt practiſed in public debates, to make a ſpecious reſiſtance.

BUT, though he did not decline engaging on any point of public and national concern, yet his attention was more eſpecially turned to ſuch as related to the church and clergy. it is not many years ſince an attempt was made in parliament to introduce a law, by which the rights of the parochial clergy would have been fundamentally affected; an attempt the more formidable, becauſe it was encouraged and ſupported by perſons of diſtinguiſhed rank in his Majeſty's government. This attempt was defeated, and the ancient rights of the clergy ſecured, by the ſpirited oppoſition which was raiſed againſt it, chiefly by his influence and authority, both within doors and without.

IN caſes of eccleſiaſtical law, which have been brought before the upper houſe of parliament, as a court of juſtice, he has

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ſome times had the honour of leading the judgment of that auguſt aſſembly, in oppoſition to ſome of the greateſt lights of the law, who had at firſt declared themſelves of a different opinion.

WHEN he was tranſlated from *Saliſbury* to this great and important dioceſe, though it was at an advanced age, his parts were in their full vigour; of which he gave ſufficient proof in the conduct of ſome points of no ſmall difficulty, both of a public and a private nature, on his firſt eſtabliſhment in the ſee. The papers and documents prepared by him on thoſe occaſions carried the marks of a maſterly hand, and ſhowed that the powers of his mind had loſt nothing of their meridian force and ſplendor. When age and infirmities had made large advances upon him, and the powers of his body were well nigh ſpent, he was ſo perfect a maſter of every branch of epiſcopal knowledge, that, with all the diſadvantages under which he laboured, he diſpatched the variety of buſineſs that came before

him, with eaſe to himſelf, and ſatisfaction to thoſe who had occaſion to apply to him. and when a general debility had at laſt poſſeſſed him, and taken from him the power of articulation and diſtinct utterance, his conception was ſtill clear and ſtrong; and in this laſt ſtate of decline, he was able to dictate his thoughts to thoſe about him, in broken words and ſentences; and has left behind him ſuch able deciſions on ſome critical points of eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, as ſhowed his judgment to be ſound and unimpaired, and would have done honour to his more vigorous age.

BUT there is nothing perhaps, that is more worthy of admiration under this uncommon ſtate of weakneſs and decline, than the extraordinary compoſure of his mind. It is one of the general characters of old age to be querulous and peeviſh. and indeed, ſickneſs and infirmity are apt to create a petulance and acrimony in the beſt natures, both young and old. but the great Prelate we are ſpeaking of, was a remarkable exception

tion to the general obſervation. though he had naturally a quickneſs and ſenſibility of temper, age and ſickneſs were ſo far from ſtimulating, that they ſerved rather to ſmooth and ſoften it. as infirmities increaſed upon him, he became more quiet and compoſed; and though in the common courſe of buſineſs, and his general intercourſe with the world, as well as the interior œconomy of his own family, incidents muſt have ariſen frequently that were diſpleaſing to him; yet nothing could ever break in upon that conſtancy of mind, and that uniform tranquillity and compoſure, that ſo happily poſſeſſed him. Had the ſame caſe occurred in the reign of ancient Stoiciſm, what triumphs would have been ſung, and what honours paid to the great maſters and ſchools of ſcience? and why ſhould its due praiſe and honour be witheld from that true philoſophy, which cometh from above? in which no man was more deeply read and practiſed than our truly chriſtian prelate, and whoſe happy ſtate of mind was the pure and genuine effect of it?

I COULD enlarge with pleaſure on other parts of this great man's hiſtory and character; but I muſt not allow myſelf to put your patience to a farther trial, nor entrench too far on time that is deſtined for other buſineſs. The diſtinguiſhed honours he received from the throne, and the reſpect that was paid to his judgment in the moſt arduous affairs of government; his intercourſe of buſineſs and friendſhip with the great men of his time; the hiſtory of his literary and controverſial productions; his more private and domeſtic virtues, with his general ſcheme and mode of life; theſe are points which will afford matter of inſtruction and entertainment, and may be worthy of your attention at ſome other time. and no apology, I hope, is wanting for engaging your thoughts, on ſuch an occaſion as this, to the conſideration of ſuch an argument. for what can be more ſuitable to the purpoſe of an eccleſiaſtical ſynod, than to contemplate the virtues, and pay an offering

fering of reſpect to the memory of thoſe, who have ſat with ſo much honour at the head of it?

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

F I N I S.